

The SL Arts and Life Magazine

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Letters from Burma
by Jami Mills

FURRY NIGHTS
with Gudrun Gausman

It's a Wonderful Second Life
as told by Harry Bailey

Love in SL – Really?
by Sedona Mills

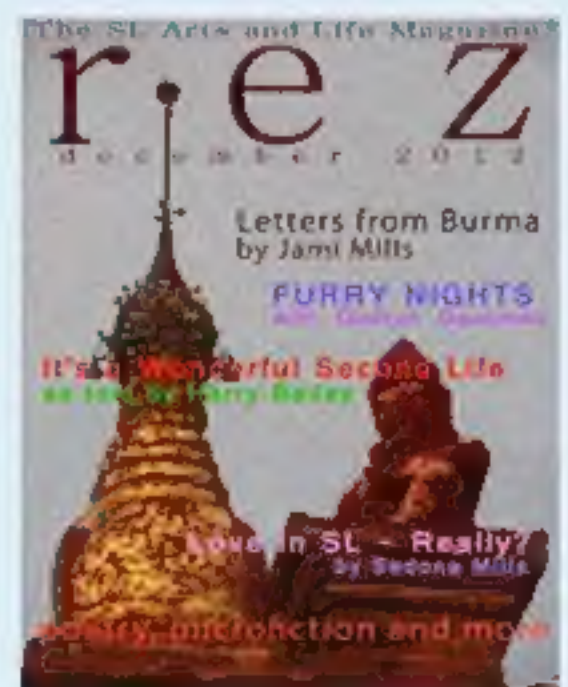
poetry, microfiction and more

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About the Cover:

Jami Mills captures an ancient figure on a Buddhist temple in Bagan, Myanmar, during her recent trip there, which served as the inspiration for her love story, *Letters from Burma*, in this issue



Dear Friends,

My amazement at my fellow writers at *rez* just never ends. Every month, I get to wait until our copy deadline, having a fuzzy idea about what every one of us will do, and every time, around the middle of the month, I find that eight writers went out and thought their own thoughts, in their own ways. But when the copy is in, miraculously we made something that could not be better if we had had endless meetings about it. So, what did we get this time?

Let's start with the routine: Cat Boccaccio put her 14 leading questions to the graphic artist, bachi Cheng. The Perfect Gentleman, Harry Bailey, thought about where in SL a gentleman might spend New Year's Eve, and came up with 10 suggestions ranging from formal to raunchy, but every one of them a place where a Gentleman might take a Lady and pleasantly cross over into the new year.

In the latest installment in her series of edgy essays on SL subcultures, Gudrun Gausman went the proverbial extra mile to investigate werewolves and other shape-shifting canines, even interviewing Bushido Fretwerk, a Lycan.

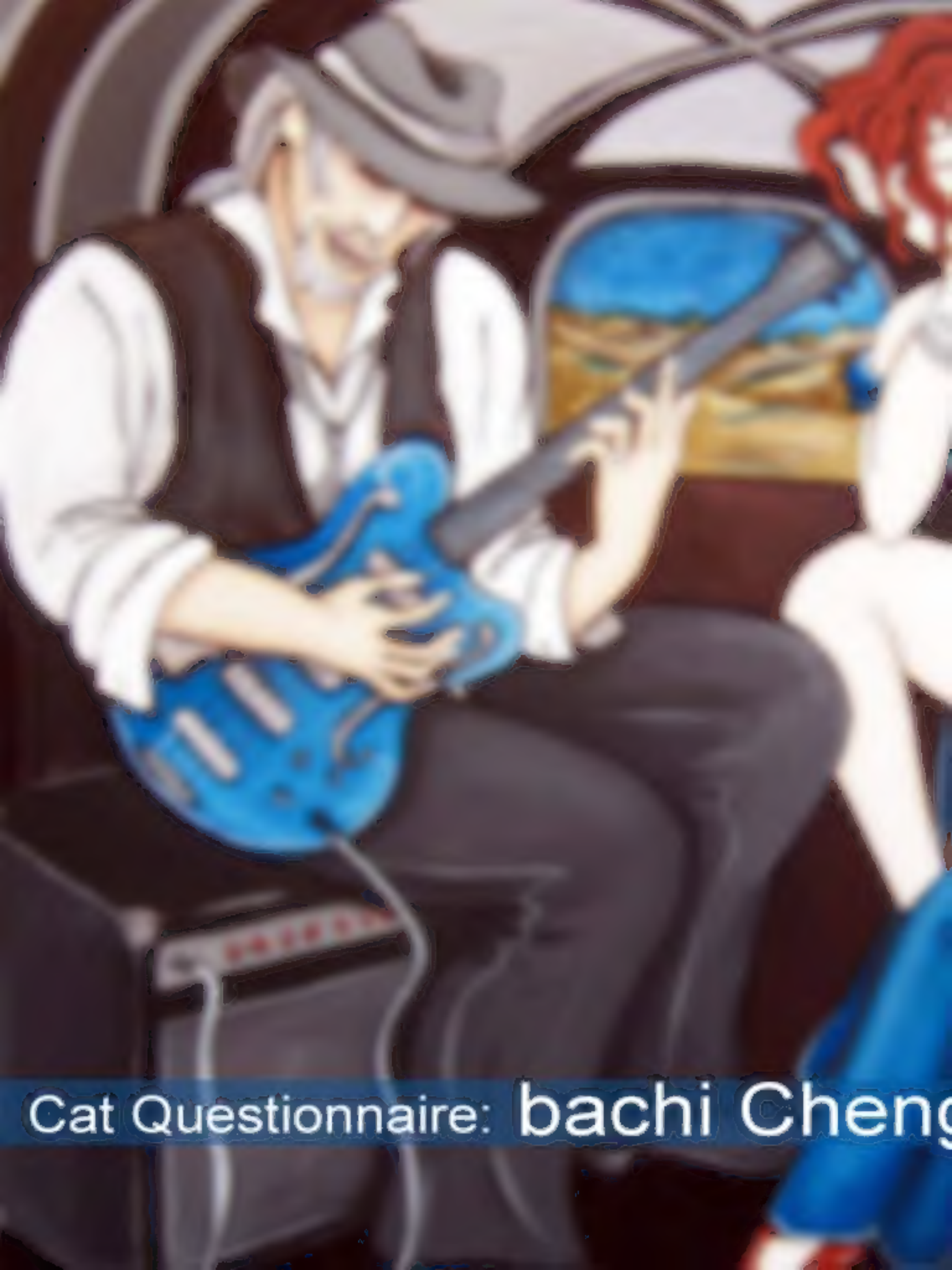
Jami Mills provides us with another work of fiction about a love spanning many divides: oceans, cultural differences, and generation gaps.

The theme of love continues in Sedona Mills' musings on love in Second Life, how people approach it, why it is almost always doomed, and surprisingly sometimes isn't. Drover Mahogany and I each have written a poem on the subject as well.

Characteristically, Drover speaks about how things may work for love in a virtual world, in the silent speaking of souls. And maybe equally characteristically, I wrote about why things fail, the dangers of asking a question, and the minute chance of receiving an answer. Enjoy!

Flor Nachtigal

Editor in Chief



Cat Questionnaire: **bach**i Cheng



g

by Cat Boccaccio

This month, artist **bach** Cheng dares to answer Cat's 14 leading questions.

SL Date of Birth: 02/15/2009

SL activity Artist: Painter

RL location: South of France

About you: When I look at a painting when it is finished, I always think that I'm going to do better next time !

1 What in SL has brought you the most happiness?

Opening my own Gallery.

2 What has given you the most sadness?

When a place I really like is no longer there.

3 How would you describe your home in SL?

It has to look nice on my screen when my avi is hanging round there.

4 Who in SL do you admire most?

Seems that I'm always too busy to admire anyone (smile) but I'm always stunned by creativity.

5 What character trait do you have in SL that is furthest from your RL personality?

I guess I'm less lazy in SL.

6 Which character trait did you leave behind in RL?

I don't have such a big mouth as in RL..

7 What is your weakness when it comes to spending your Linden dollars?

Dance animations.

8 What is your favorite place in Second Life, and why?

Hotlanta Blues Club, good DJs and friendly hostesses, always fun to be there, and a great owner DonPaul Cale.

9 What scares you the most in (or about) Second Life?

I'm sorry to say that I'm not scared of anything and I don't see what should scare me.

10 What is your secret pleasure in SL?
Building and terraforming.

11 What would it take to drive you out of Second Life?
The death of my computer.

12 What one word would you use to describe the art community in SL?
Friendly.

13 What are you most proud of in SL?
Being proud is not in my nature.

14 If you built a sim from scratch with unlimited resources, what would it be called?
"The Boat of Fools".

bach's main gallery:

ARTCoRE Gallery in Northfarthing

<http://maps.secondlife.com/secondlife/Northfarthing/147/223/601>

The Art of bachi Cheng (video by dee Tison)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QT5chQcjDxY&feature=youtu.be>



What's Your Issue?

a monthly advice column by
Gudrun Gausman

Dear Gudrun:

I believe that God may have put me in the wrong body. I sort of feel that I am more canine (wolf) than human. I have gold eyes. I have too much hair for a girl, including a unibrow. My nails grow rapidly. I have sharp, elongated canines. All I eat is meat, and in restaurants I growl at the waiter. I'm starting to develop a hatred for humans. I have a compulsion to chew on things. Oh, and I feel really strange during a full moon.

I hope you can answer my question, which is two-fold: How can I know for certain whether or not I am a werewolf; and, secondly, is Second Life a satisfactory outlet for these Lycan feelings?

Hopefully,

Lupita O.

Dear Lupita,

First of all, if you've been asking this question for a while (over a month), you are NOT a werewolf. You would know by now. The moon is full once a month. If you were a werewolf, you most certainly would have experienced a transformation.

Did something attack you? One becomes a werewolf by being bitten by a fully operational werewolf. If a wolf-like creature has not attacked you in the past month, you are probably not a werewolf.

If a creature did attack you, but it was not at night during a full moon or on the nights just before and after the full moon (the waxing and waning), it was not a werewolf, and therefore you are not a werewolf.

However, if you have reason to believe the person who fathered you was a werewolf, you probably ARE. But, if you are a hereditary werewolf (i.e., a werewolf since birth), you have doubtless undergone transformation many

times, and there is no question.

To help you get a handle on this, here are the moon phases for 2012 and 2013:

<http://www.calendar-365.com/moon/moon-phases.html>

If you were attacked by a wolf-like creature in the last month or so and it was during the full moon, you probably do have cause for concern. You will want to ready yourself for your first transformation, which will occur at the next full moon. This is a critical time for the new werewolf. Inexperienced werewolves often run afoul of aggressive and well-armed humans. As is so often the case when ferocious and dangerous beasts appear in their midst, humans may react violently. Many a bear or mountain lion has paid dearly for wandering into town. And, you being a werewolf, nobody is simply going to cart you off to the nearest zoo.

Some tip-offs that you have a transformation coming:

A werewolf's hands are broad and its fingers short, and there are always some hairs in the hollow of its hand. Check your palms. If your palms are covered with a coarse, stiff growth of hair, you may be a werewolf. Another certain sign of the werewolf, according to a vast number of ancient traditions,

lies in the extreme length of the index finger. If your index finger is considerably longer than the middle finger, you are quite likely a werewolf. In human form, a werewolf usually has slanted eyebrows that meet at the bridge of the nose; also small pointed ears, protruding teeth (elongated canines), and/or strangely compelling eyes.



If you were attacked, after the attack, how quickly did you heal? Werewolves generally experience supernaturally fast healing. Also, werewolves are immune from aging and from most physical diseases because of the associated constant regeneration of their physical tissue. Unfortunately, they must return to human form, where all the rules of mortality still apply.

Are you having bestial and/or sexually

violent dreams? In them, are you running at high speed close to the ground, searching for edible or sexual prey? The wildness of the wolf blending with the human body is what attracts many to lycanthropy. Or for others it is the fact that a hero or heroine will overcome and withstand the danger and fierceness of the beast because the one they love is trapped inside the contorted, vicious body. The animalism is part of the cachet and attraction of the werewolf.

Do you have heightened senses of hearing and smell? Do you hear sounds you couldn't hear before, and are you able to pinpoint their locations? Does it seem your sense of smell has been amplified about 100,000 times, and do the odors of urine and feces fascinate rather than repel you? Has your vision become equivalent to red/green color blindness, but become extremely acute at night?

Have you had the urge to mark your territory? I'm not talking about needing to pee at an inopportune time, I'm talking about seeking a place to deposit your scent at roughly nose height, high enough to allow it to radiate over a large area (e.g., on a fire hydrant or tree).

Whatever the case, don't worry. Many Real Life female Lycans are attractive and even "hot." :-) In preparation for a

transformation, you may wish to watch this video. Given the difficulty of capturing a transformation as it occurs in life, it is an animation. However, it is a fair representation of what you can expect.

<http://archive.org/details/FemaleWerewolfTransformationAnimation>

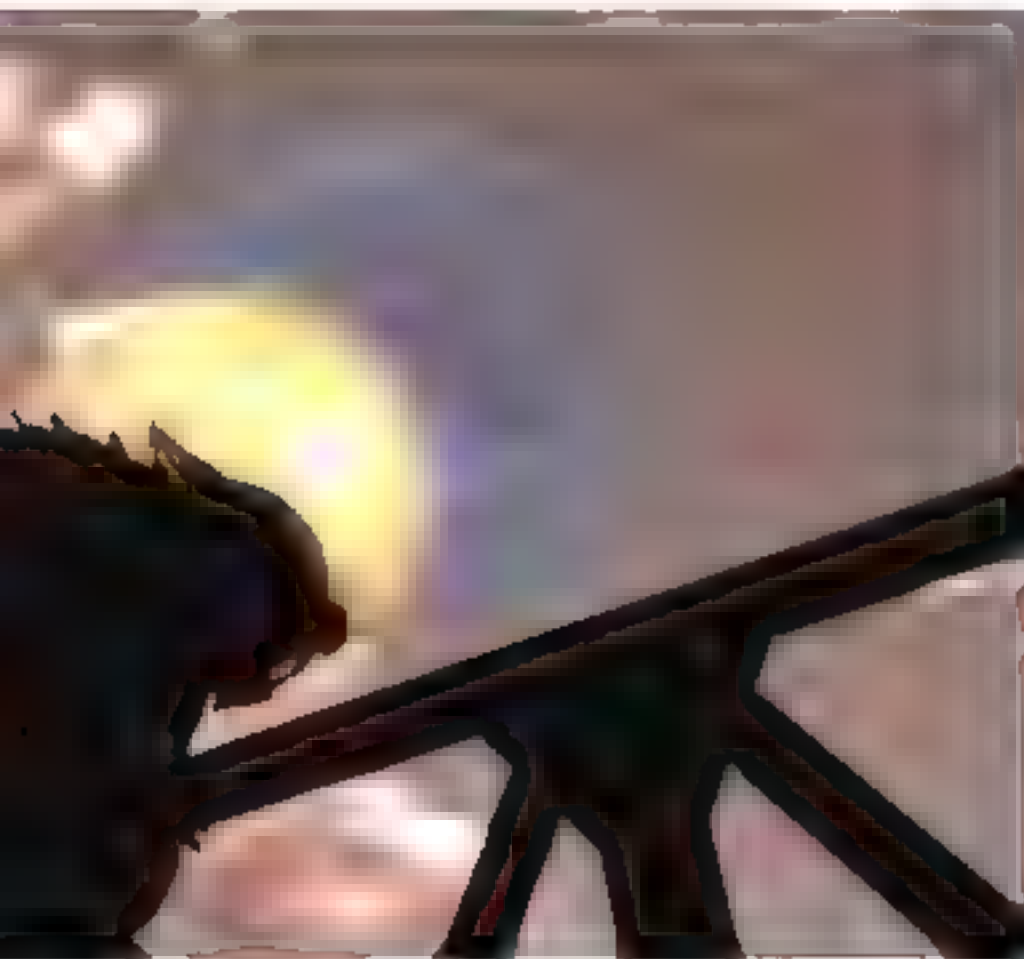


Now having gotten all of this Real Life nonsense out of the way, let's talk about Second Life... The following represents a chat with Bushido Fretwerk, a well-known SL Lycan and DJ. It will answer some of the questions you might have about Lycanthropy in SL.

INTERVIEW WITH BUSHIDO FRETWERK

GG: Where did werewolves originate?

BF: Reference to werewolves is found in Greek mythology at its earliest reference, but also can be found in about all cultures of the world from Europe to



Asia and even in Native American mythology. So where we came from is a mystery or a secret. LOL

GG: How does one become a werewolf? Voluntary, involuntary, or what?

BF: Well this brings up the question of the difference between a werewolf and a Lycan... Werewolves are a little larger than humans and have canine charac-

teristics whereas Lycans look like giant size bipedal canines. This is due to the fact that Lycans are created from the mutated version of the virus that causes Lycanthropy. This means that Lycans are larger, stronger, faster, and are capable of reasoning and full speech, though werewolves can have speech also. There are several ways one can become a werewolf. One is to wear a belt made of wolf hide. Others involve witchcraft, drinking water from the paw print of a wolf, or sleeping under a full moon during certain days of a full moon. The most common is that of a bite or scratch from someone who is a werewolf. Now while magic can transform someone into a werewolf, that is only a temporary transformation as compared to someone who is infected with Lycanthropy. So this brings up the question of whether it is a curse or disease. Some may say it is both. I do not see it as either. For myself it is a new way of living, and I'm having a howling good time!!!! It is said the drinking a potion of wolfsbane will cure an individual of Lycanthropy. But why would you want to do that? It's fun being the big dog. LOL I myself went through what is called a turning process to become a Lycan.

GG: Are you mortal or immortal? Evil?

BF: No, I am not immortal and not evil, but I am sure some are evil.



GG: *There's a lot of mystery surrounding werewolves. People envision themselves walking down a dark alley, seeing a werewolf, and running like heck, or shooting him with a silver bullet (if they happen to be the Lone Ranger). In reality, should they try to get to know him, or are their instincts correct?*

BF: Well one is going to be afraid of what they do not know. So take a chance, what is the worst that can happen? Oh, and if you do decide to run, well we all know canines love the chase. So if you want to go for a good run, go ahead and run. LOL

GG: *Do you know when you are transforming or will transform into a werewolf? What about the full moon?*

BF: Yes I know when I will transform

this being because I am a Lycan and can control the transformation. With that said, I also can be affected by the full moon as also outside stimulus, such as stress, anger or even sexual tension.

GG: *What about silver bullets?*

BF: Werewolves and Lycans can be killed. As we know, werewolves can be killed by a silver bullet or a weapon made of silver.

GG: *Do werewolves eat people?*

BF: I am sure some do, but I know I prefer to coexist.

GG: *Have you, personally, ever attacked, killed, bitten, or eaten a person?*

BF: Yes, I have attacked and bitten some but only with the person's permission. Respect does go a long way. As far as eaten or killed, no!!

GG: *Are there vegan werewolves?*

BF: Not to my knowledge, but anything is possible.

GG: *What do you like most about being a werewolf?*

BF: Well when you are in a roomful of people they all know you are there by your size. You always look down at

everyone. LOL

GG: *What do you like least about being a werewolf? Is there a drawback that aspiring werewolves may not be aware of?*

BF: Well some places will not allow our kind and finding clothes is not easy.

GG: *Are werewolves (as opposed to wolves) protected by the Endangered Species Act? Is it true that it's known among werewolves as the Freedom to Feed Act? What about those on again/off again wolf management efforts?*

BF: Endangered Species Act... that's a laugh!!! We have been around for as long as one can remember, so I do not think we are going anywhere. All creatures deserve to be able to feed. LOL Management?? How can you look at something that is evolutionarily above all others and try to manage it? There is no way, we move to our own dictates.

GG: *Have you ever been hunted? By professionals? By angry mobs with pitchforks and torches?*

BF: No.

GG: *Do you belong to a "pack," and what is your status?*

BF: No, I actually belong to a clan, but



there is a pack of us in the clan. The clan that I belong to is the Renegade Outcasts. We as a clan are a bunch of fun-loving, no-drama, party animals who like to let our hair down and howl at the moon!!! Our main thing is to treat all with respect.

GG: *Do werewolves recognize national borders? You see werewolves of London, American werewolves in London, American werewolves in Paris... Are you intimidated by foreign menus, or is there some global "wolfdom" that obviates all such problems?*

BF: What are borders to a free spirit? LOL, we move to where we wish to be.

GG: *How do you feel about how werewolves are portrayed in the media?*

BF: Well we all know that were-wolves/Lycans get the short end of the stick, we are always seen as bad and all that we want to do is kill. Well that is so wrong. We love people and love to have a good time like everyone else. So it is good to see someone from the media take time to interview me.

GG: *What is your favorite werewolf movie?*

BF: "Underworld," of course!!!

GG: *How do werewolves feel about waxing?*

BF: Hate it!!!!

GG: *Are werewolves monogamous?*

BF: For me yes, for others I have no clue.

GG: *As a werewolf, what are your "core values"?*

BF: Well for me it is to treat all with respect. You have to remember that if you wish to be treated with respect you have to show you can be respectful as well

GG: *How do you feel about witches and vampires? Have you ever met any other such creatures, and what was your experience?*

BF: Well as far as witches, I have as yet to meet any. Now I do know and have run into a few vampires. The leader of the Renegade Outcasts just happens to be a friend of mine. Most of the vampires I know are very nice and I have no issue with them at all. I have run into a few vampires, well, whom I did not care for too much, but to each his own.

Added comments:

BF: I myself love to run around as Lycan. It gives you the chance to RP with others to whom you may just talk otherwise. And you never know what someone will say, but you can bet that it will be something like 'Don't eat me!' or 'OMG, look how big he is!' At that point, you can really run with how you decide to act and what you say. I work as a Lycan DJ in-world, and love to do it. So you can work as Lycan. So if you wish to be a werewolf/Lycan, you have a wide range of ways to go about being one. Let your imagination run wild. But always remember to have fun with what you do. So if you want to join the pack and run with the Big Dogs, go ahead and let your inner beast out!!! Howwlzzzzz!!!!

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Santa, the Easter Bunny, and Ben Affleck

by Crap Mariner

Letters from fiction books



photo

A vibrant rainbow arches over a body of water, with a sandy beach in the foreground. The rainbow's colors are bright and distinct, contrasting with the blue of the water and sky. The overall scene is peaceful and scenic.

om Burma

y Jami Mills

graphy by Jami Mills

Amelia's father touched her arm tenderly and told her to brace herself. "She's resting comfortably, but you've never seen her like this before. I don't want it to shock you." Her brother, on the other hand, wanted to remember Tong in happier times, hovering over the stove, boiling rice noodles and frying bits of pork and scallions, all the while singing to herself in that lilting voice of hers, her hands moving with a delicate efficiency. It even made him smile to recall how Tong would scold him when he'd try to sneak a taste of some Asian delicacy she was preparing. Nothing would get by Tong. "I have a hundred eyes," she'd warn. "You'd better not try anything." So Amelia understood why he declined to join her at the hospital. But it was different with her. She needed to say goodbye.

'Resting comfortably' Amelia thought to herself. Isn't that what they always say when someone is doped up on morphine? "Daddy, I haven't even seen her yet and I'm already crying. This isn't going to be easy, is it?"

"She's lived an amazing life, Amelia. You of all people know that. We should all be so lucky to have such a rich life - so full of love and compassion. She's in this room here. Ready?" Amelia took a deep breath and strode right in. She took in the sight of what seemed like a

dozen different IV tubes, like a tangle of the jungle vines she grew up with, machines pumping and whirring everywhere, a nurse taking her vitals. And tears began to stream down Amelia's face. "Oh, Daddy. She looks so small." She took her father's arm, for balance as much as anything. And she shook, feeling very frail herself at that moment.

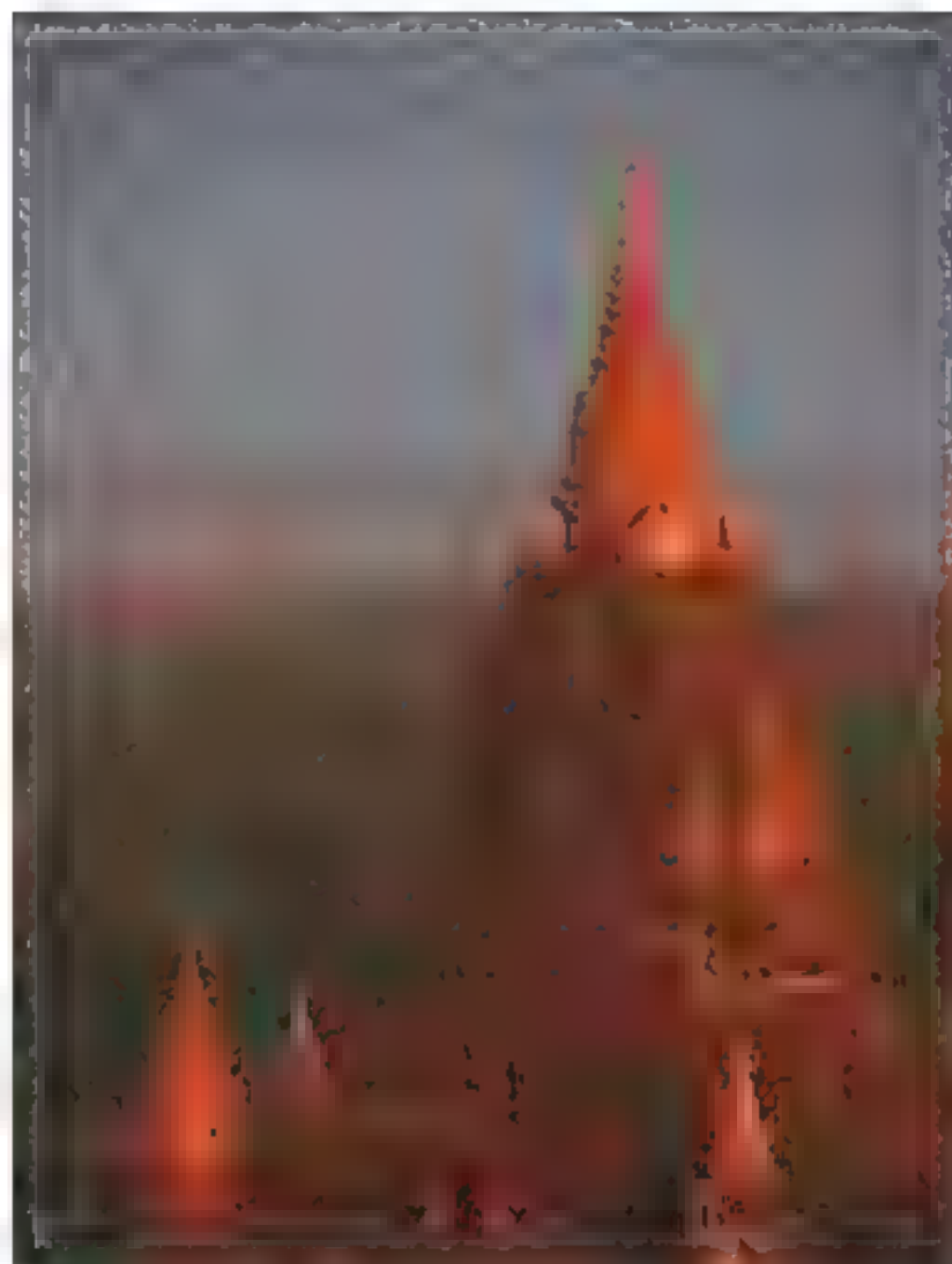
Amelia sat by her side, sometimes stroking Tong's leg through the blankets. She hummed the same song to Tong that Tong used to sing to her when she'd brush Amelia's hair, until the nurse told her she must leave. She slept in a chair in the waiting room with her father. In the early morning, a doctor came in and sat next to my father. One look at his expression and she knew. "She passed away peacefully. She was never in any pain. My deepest sympathies for your loss." Just like that she was gone, forever.

Amelia quietly sat cross-legged on the floor in the den, watching how the afternoon light slipped through the Venetian blinds, catching the dust motes. She closed her eyes and began a meditation that Tong had taught her. No mantra was involved, just an awareness of all of the sounds about her and each sensation of her body. Concentrating on the rhythm of her breathing, she allowed all of her thoughts to

wander where they may, rather than trying to rid herself of them. This was Tong's Buddhist teaching. This was her legacy for Amelia. Her father knew not to disturb her while she was meditating, but when she began to stir, he popped his head in the room. "You know there's a suitcase of your grand father's in the attic with some memorabilia in it. Old photos and such. You might find it interesting. It's to the right by the big chest."

She tugged at the rope in the hall, pulling the ladder down from its recess in the ceiling and climbed up the steps. Her old toys, the hobby horse she used to play with, her hockey sticks – they were all stored up there. So many distant memories. 'Is that what attics are for? To store memories?' she thought to herself. There was a pervasive dank, moldy smell. Everything neatly in its place. She knelt down next to a large tan suitcase, weathered from thousands of miles of travel, no doubt. Pulling the chain of the overhead light, Amelia sat down on the uneven wooden floor, careful to not get any splinters. She centered the suitcase in front of her and undid its balky latches.

Amelia had no idea what her grandfather may have treasured so much as to preserve for all these years. And not share with her. Was he running away



from some awful truth ... hiding a past he wanted to forget? Or simply saving things so personal that no one else would appreciate or understand? Amelia squinted her eyes in the dim afternoon light and took in the contents: a small bundle of frayed photos; two charm bracelets, tarnished dark over the years; a faded tan scarf printed with elephants; a small ornamental dagger in a bejeweled sheath; a baseball, signed but illegible; and a stuffed horned toad. But it was what was under the scarf that made Amelia's heart begin to pound.

She picked up the sheath of letters, neatly bound with string, each written on the thinnest of paper – almost like parchment, but all neatly preserved. She saw Tong's unmistakable script on each of the letters, all addressed to my grandfather. There must have been twenty or more. Without any hesitation, without any thought of her grandfather's privacy, she loosened the small knot with her fingernails and opened the first letter.

July 15, 1945

Rangoon, Burma

My dearest,

I have always considered my heart strong. With all of the suffering it has endured, each beat I thought surely made it stronger still. But nothing prepared me for the ache it now feels for you, my dearest love. I miss you terribly, most of all your sparkling eyes.

The troubles in the city have reached an impossible magnitude. What the Japanese didn't destroy outright, they looted. I cannot bear to tell you of their cruelty. You told me of the massacre in the Kalagong village and I remember not believing you. But they are all now gone, thanks to you and the other soldiers who have once again given us

hope. You are a hero not only to me, but to all of my people as well.

I am not a member of Aung San's revolutionary party, but he has my undying support. He has returned to Burma and is forming a new government with the Thirty Comrades. But my hope lies not in politics, or even my homeland. My hope, which sustains me even as I write this, is to be held in your tender, loving arms.

Devotedly yours,

Tong



'Tong. Such a passion for life, such a generous heart. How could anyone be surprised granddad fell in love with you,' thought Amelia. She heard her father tinkering in the kitchen, shutting the cabinets too loudly. Her hands trembled slightly as she opened the next letter.

September 3, 1945

Inle Lake, Burma

My dearest love,

Auspiciousness to you, my dear Au-



gustine. The monsoons have made living in Rangoon intolerable - - the entire city is flooded. So I've made my way to Susu's home at Inle Lake, where the floods have no effect on their stilted homes. They are accustomed to the water. You might say they own the water.

Susu is teaching me weaving and I'm watching her silhouetted by the afternoon sun as I write, the golden strands from dozens of spools catching the sun's rays before they merge into the loom. Her husband is on the lake, catching Trouble Fish. He'll swat his paddle on the water's surface to scare the fish into his nets. We'll have a nice fish stew tonight when he returns, with chilies and coriander.

I haven't heard from you since the rains have come, but I know you are smiling as you read this. I have a hundred eyes you know, and each one is laughing and watching you now. I don't know how or when, but I know I will find a way to you, to your arms, to your kisses. I am blushing as I write this. I know that I am not supposed to feel desire in my heart, for things or possessions. But nothing can stop my heart from desiring you. Now, always and forever.

Lovingly yours,

Tong

Amelia noticed that water drops had stained the letter. She wondered whether they were from the rains or whether they dropped from Tong's eyes as she wrote. She must have felt such anguish being separated from grand dad.

Amelia opened each of the other letters covering the years after the war, and each touched her heart with Tong's outpouring of love, undiminished by the interval of time. She read them all, and Amelia's own tears stained the last one. 'I know you are with me now, Tong. I know your blood flows through my own veins. I know how your story ended, now that you're gone,' thought Amelia.

July 21, 1947

Mandalay, Burma

My darling Augustine,

You have no idea the joy that I feel at this moment. Yes, perhaps you do. You are feeling it also, I can tell. By now you know how many eyes I am watching you with.

Do you know what I am holding in my hands? No, of course you don't. You have only two eyes, and they are preoccupied with reading this letter. I am holding my papers the District Office is-

sued me today, my dearest love. I never dared let myself believe this day would actually come, but it has. I prayed to Buddha every day for the strength to survive your absence, and he has given me all I needed. Through my father's efforts (and substantial bribe - thank you for your help with that), I have passage to Bangkok and from there I have made arrangements to travel to Hong Kong. I will need to stop in Oahu before arriving in San Francisco on January 15th (in the evening).

I am crying as I write this because I can see your sparkling eyes meeting mine as I step off the aeroplane. All of our dreams are finally coming true. You waited for me and that fills my eyes with tears again. You were never outside my heart.

There is one bit of sad news I must share with you. Aung San was assassinated in Rangoon day before yesterday by the criminal, U Saw, who was arrested for the murder and will be tried in the coming months. This is no doubt a great setback for all the reforms we have worked so hard for. Aung San has a lovely young daughter who took his name, though. Perhaps someday she will take up her father's cause and make him proud.

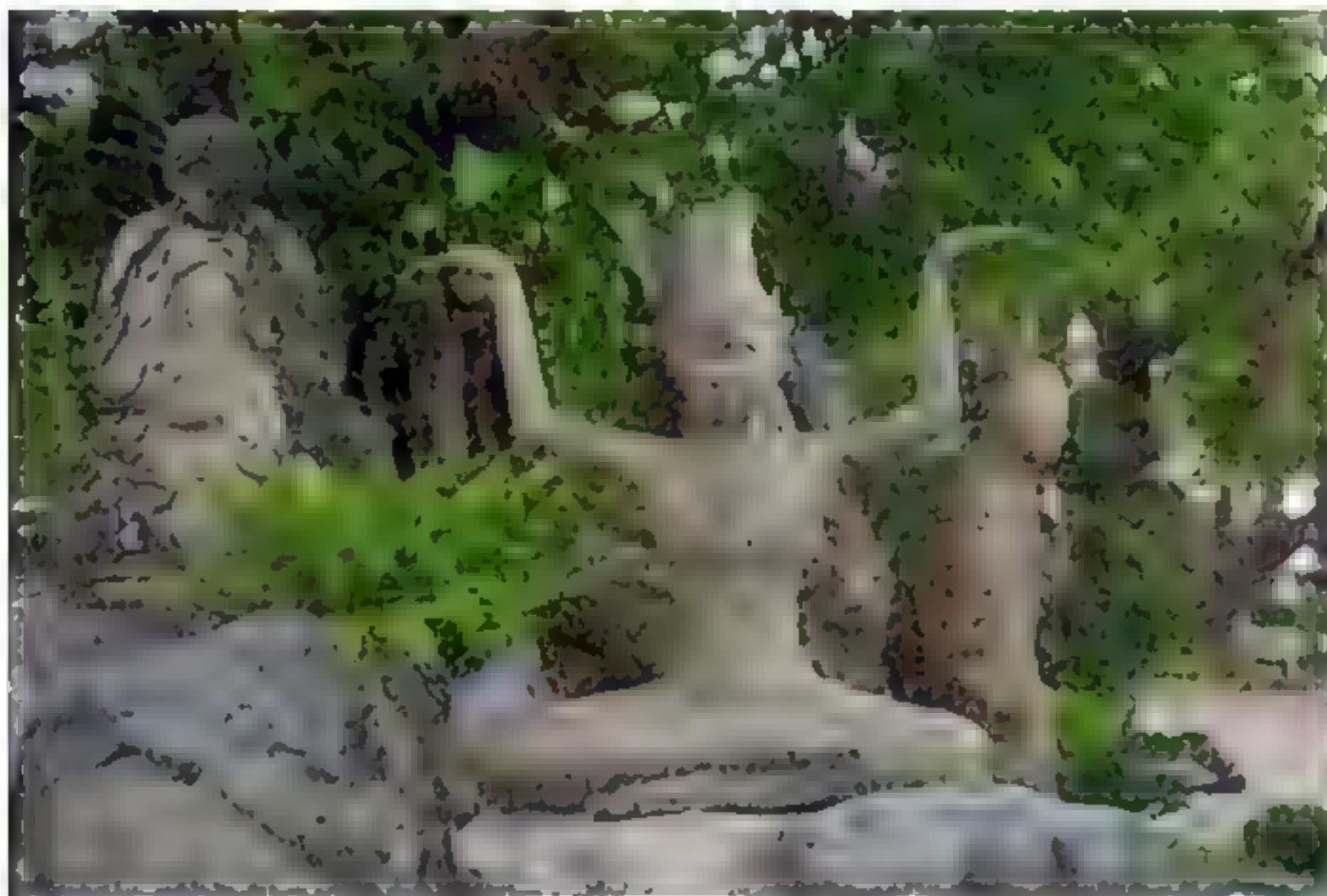
This country has always been filled with sadness, but I refuse to let it diminish the joy I otherwise feel at this moment. I will

send you a telegraph from Oahu with confirmation of my arrival. Oh, and I'm bringing a little Burmese kitten with me, Kyi. I hope she has no difficulty speaking to your cat Fritz.

With a thousand kisses,

Tong

Amelia dropped this final letter in her lap, her tears flowing in torrents now. She held nothing back, sobbing into her hands. 'You are in my blood, my heart, dearest Tong. I love you now, always and forever,' she spoke out loud, the smell of pork bits and scallions wafting up from the kitchen.



CAT'S BEACH GALLERY

<http://slurl.com/secondlife/Zebrine%20island/94/60/4>

<http://www>



Wonder

by



ful Second Life

the Perfect Gentleman, Harry Bailey

If you have not happened to make the connection yet, my SL name originated from a character in one of my favorite holiday movies, *It's a Wonderful Life*. Yes, the Jimmy Stewart movie where he and Donna Reed save that old Building and Loan and make a life for themselves in Bedford Falls. No need for a Second Life for the two of them - they have all they need with each other and a town full of friends.

However, there is another of those holiday classics that provides the opposite perspective. If you have not yet seen the Bing Crosby, Fred Astaire movie, *Holiday Inn*, I can highly recommend it as a perfect lesson in what drives one to seek out a "Second Life."

In typical 1940s style, the movie begins with Fred and Bing as top notch celebrity entertainers in demand 365 days a year with extra performances on all the holidays. Glamour, fame, wo-

men, not to mention having to spend every night dancing and singing in a tux! Why would anyone in this position need a second life?

Yet as the story moves along, Bing decides he is tired of constant work and wants to escape to a simpler life out in the country at a small Connecticut farm. He leaves the glamour of Manhattan for chickens and pigs, only to discover that that life comes with just as many challenges, only packaged in new and different ways.

As many of us do here in Second Life, Bing realizes he misses singing, dancing and his tux and works to find a compromise to blend his lives. In true Second life fashion, he rebuilds his farmhouse to become a dinner club. Presto! He is the owner and lead star of his new "Holiday Inn."

Now, Holiday Inn is a club that rivals the best of SL clubs, with one minor ex-

ception: it is only open on HOLIDAYS! 13 of them in a year, and several falling in close proximity. I won't ruin this great classic movie for you, but with its Irving Berlin music and Bing and Astaire, it is a must if you love romance. For you trivia buffs, it is also the original source for the Christmas classic White Christmas, which was first written for this movie.

When I watch this movie every year, one brief segment always makes me think of those great old clubs and newspaper reviews of the past. The "Where to Go on New Year's Eve" club reviews of glamour and sparkle. As the Perfect Gentleman, I thought I might offer all of you a few tips on where to be, and be seen, on NYE 2012/2013.

By the way, in the movie the club "Holiday Inn" is of course ONLY open on those 13 holidays and reverts to a working farm the other 352 days of the year. As you consider your New Years eve clubbing, remember to check the schedules of events for each of these great clubs.

In the film Holiday Inn, the fictional New York papers answer the rhetorical question "Why go to Holiday Inn?" with "Why? Don't ask, just go and have fun!" In this case, find time during December to check out some of the following great venues depending on your tastes. When you find a few you like,

join the group, get the info on their New Year's plans and then anticipate a New Year's Eve like you have never before experienced in SL, in the arms of that special someone!

HOTLANTA - Great blues, busy all evenings into late night SL time and live DJs that know their music. Also, it always has wonderful hosts paired with

glamour, fame
would anyone
need a sec

the DJs to keep the evening flowing. Special holidays often include live entertainers and rooftop dancing at the club. Casual attire at all times and an easygoing feel.

SAVOY- Lovely dancing along the waterfront with regularly scheduled DJs and events. Romantic setting with great slow dance music and blues, but check the event schedule as it is often empty when no scheduled event is happening.

FRANK'S ELITE - Great venue that prides itself on romance and slow dancing. But as with all things romantic at the holidays, this club has a member-

ship fee. If you are not a member, be prepared to pay the hefty membership fee to join before you hit the dance floor. Formal attire required and a very formal atmosphere.

MOCOMBO Unique music that shifts with the mood of the DJ throughout the week. Some great Latin dancing on many occasions and good Latin dance

e, women...why
in this position
and life?

animations on the Intan if you are so inclined. This club has the look and feel of its namesake from 1940-60 s club on the Sunset Strip in West Hollywood. In 1943 when Frank Sinatra made his solo debut, it was at Mocombo. While you won't run into Frank, you will find a great vintage romantic setting.

HARRY FRYCHESTER - (Search Harry Frychester and then select the 'Follow' option on his profile to get his schedule) - One of the great live performers across SL, the "Other Harry" makes any evening fun wherever he performs in SL. Get into his group and follow his gigs throughout the holidays and then

plan on tracking him down New Year's weekend for a great time of live male vocals. Harry does draw a crowd (probably not only his singing but also his first name of course) so be prepared for lag and rezz issues no matter what venue he is performing in.

BLUE NOTE One of the oldest venues for swing and old time dance tunes in SL, this club has the feel of a 1960s era club for playboys. Again, the key is coming to the club when scheduled events are on the agenda as the club is often empty when no DJ events are in process.

BELAR ISHTAN - One never knows what might be on tap at this club. Graylon Ash is frequently the DJ du jour here, and his themed evenings are always well worth attending. Who knows what NYE might bring, but I can tell you I have seen everything from "A"lien to "Z"oo animal on the docket for his evenings. Come prepared for an active local chat and friendly atmosphere with great and quirky tunes always on the play list.

BIG JACK ROLLS and KAEJAE TRUSS (search Bigjack Rolls and then click the 'Follow' menu option on his profile to find out his schedule) - One of the great "Song and Dance" teams in SL! Big Jack spins great tunes and Kaejae has over 2,100 dance animations on her group hud and knows how to match

them to any music. Conga lines, Macarena, Gangnam style, YMCA, chicken dance, this is the place to be if you want fun and variety and laughter in your New Year's plans. These two move around SL, so check out Big Jack's group again to find their holiday schedule and then prepare to enjoy some of the best single synced dancing there is. If somehow you accidentally misplaced your date for the evening, then this is the place for you! Single dancers are a regular norm when dancing with Kaejae and the friendly local chat makes it easy to blend in.

RUNAROUND SUE'S - Okay, so your memories of the holidays were back in high school when you finally got your very first New Year's Eve date without being chaperoned by your dad 'cause you still did not have your license. If you can identify with those days back in the 50s and 60s, then Runaround Sue's is the place to be for the never ending sock hop! Complete with a pink Cadillac parked just off the dance floor and great hosting and DJs, you can always find fun on this dance floor. Easy to dance for those single and new to SL, and the dance floor has plenty of synced dance pads to hop on and look like a doowop pro as the venue puts you in perfect sync with those around you. This is also one of the great places where even if you are single you can enjoy great group dancing.

DUKES OF HAZZARD - The name says it all. If country and western is your dance of choice then this is the place to wear those Daisy Duke jeans and take the pickup out for a night of line dancing. (I refer to the one with four wheels and a gun rack, not your DATE!) When I have been there, it has always been busy so come prepared for that lovely Linden gray look when you land here. Plenty of graphics of the General Lee adorn the walls so expect what the name touts. NO FORMAL attire here but cowboy hats, boots, spurs, chaps and plenty of fringe across this dance floor.

There you have it, a brief review of ten of the fun clubs of SL. From the ultra-romantic to the casual - - something for everyone. Just remember, no matter what you have in mind for the evening it is still New Year's Eve. This means looking sharp no matter if it's snake-skin boots and matching cowboy hat for Dukes, or that perfect ball gown or tux and tails for Frank's Elite. Also, you will find that none of these venues has an "A" dult rating. These clubs are for building up your evening's romance and setting a wonderful mood. What happens after that kiss under the ball at midnight is up to you and your special someone!

Even more importantly, remember this is a time for friendship and sharing so expectations run high and romance

plays a huge part in the evenings events. Take time to anticipate the fun of the evening as you get your look on and your plans made.

When it comes to midnight, that special kiss is of course obligatory even for the perfect gentleman or lady! Romantic or friendly, there is no better way to end Second Life New Year's Eve with that Hug and KISS offered to that very special individual that chose to share their special evening with their special friend . . . YOU!

At this point, I have no idea where I will spend this NYE, but as I dance my way across SL I do hope to see all of you out there enjoying the evening as much as I shall!

(Editor's Note: The Perfect Gentleman recommends that aspiring PGs invest in a quality tux and provides the LM to his favorite formal-wear shop:
<http://slurl.com/second-life/GOWNS/73/65/762>)

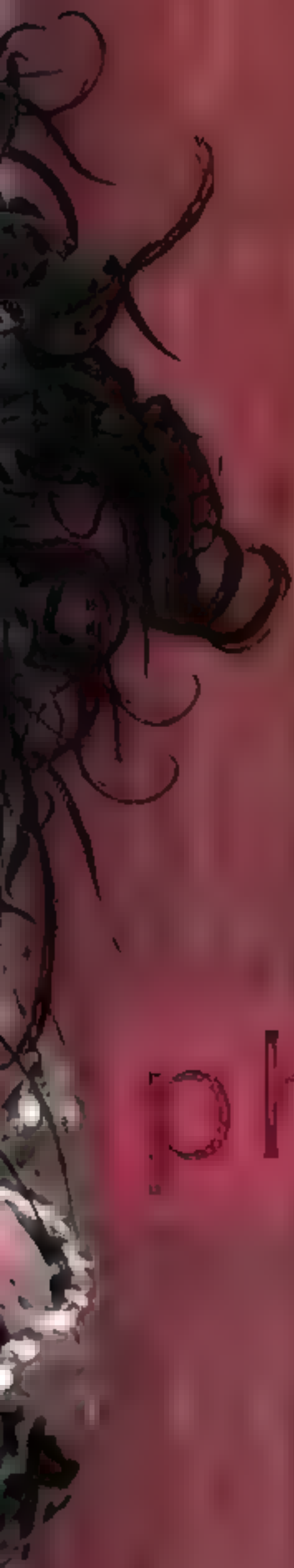
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photography

jami mills

Love in Sec



A watercolor illustration of a man with a beard and a fish. The man is on the left, looking down with a somber expression. The fish is on the right, facing the man. The background is a light, textured wash of colors.

Second Life - Really?

by Sedona Mills

Hello again! This is my second article for rez magazine. I've thought about what I should write this month, and I've had lots of help from friends with ideas. In the end, I felt that y'all wanted my opinion on everything Second Life. Is it because I feel my Second Life pontifications are edge-of-your-seat must reads? No. My goal is to spark thought and reflection. So please take my opinion not as gospel, but as a starting point to your own reflections about this virtual world we all inhabit. And hey, if you want to share your opinion with me, please send me a note. I'd love to hear from you.

So yeah, what is love when it comes to Second Life? When I first posed the question to myself, the first thought that came to me was those head bobbing skits that SNL put on. The skit portrays a slick bare-chested fella coming up to some hapless woman with some one-liner that you've heard before, over and over again, with the song "what is love" banging away in the background. The irony about this is that in many cases, I've seen that same art of the pickup applied to me regardless if it's from a man or woman avatar in our virtual world too. And yeah, in some cases the bare chest is on a woman

In Second Life, as in the SNL skit, love was not really a factor in the blossoming courtship at hand. Lust is probably

the stronger motivating emotion driving many of these impending train wrecks. But sometimes, not often, but sometimes those trains heading for that cliff don't crash and burn, but explode in a frenzy of emotion. Even though the aggressor acts like the proverbial coyote who painted the train tunnel on the mountain and the roadrunner, for reasons unknown, runs right through it. We don't know why this miracle happens and we don't ask. But here is the real interesting part about love in Second Life: we... are... cartoons!!

So what ignited that spark to take an interest? My personal experiences in our virtual universe always lead me to question this. Is my avatar that sexy? Does she interest you that much? When I'm approached, I usually get these three basic questions;

1. *How old are you?* – My profile says I'm about five and one-half years old. Oh, you mean how old am I my real life?

2. *Where do you live?* – Well I have this really nice little 8192 sqm corner plot on a private island sim. Oh, you mean where do I live in real life?

3. *Are you really a woman?* – How can I not be a woman? I have cleavage from my neck to my legs! Oh, you are asking if I am a woman in real life.

Don't think of these questions as trivial. In each case when I get that unsolicited IM, I realize this person isn't interested in Sedona and her life. This person is interested in Sedona's Puppeteer; in other words, me. So this brings up another question: If my avatar was not appealing visually, would this same person still contact me? I think not. But am I wrong about my cynical viewpoint here regarding first encounters?

real life, I usually point people to my profile. That's when it gets interesting!

In my profile I have a real life picture of me and, yeah, I made sure it was a nice one. What usually happens then is interest in me becomes very significant, not Sedona, but me. Sometimes the offers for sex range from the innocuous "let me show you my place" (yeah, I learned what that really means in real

...sometimes those trains heading for that cliff don't crash and burn, but explode in a frenzy of emotion

The conundrum I find myself facing, is why does this person want to know about my real life when the initial attraction is most likely Sed's physical appearance? I'm sure we can discuss the obvious issues surrounding the certainty of my real life womanhood and my suitor's issues with their own sexuality. But that discussion would lead my rant on love off of the rails. Or would it? I'm one of those crazy people that does put a little bit of something about my real life in my profile. I do this in the hope that I don't get the above three questions as much. It doesn't help. But when I do get asked about my

life, too) to just a simple abrupt "I want to fuck you... let's go now". At this point you're probably asking yourself, "What is this dizzy bitch Sedona trying to convey to me? Get to the point." My point is that even though in many cases somebody is just looking for a cheap thrill with a woman in real life, what got their attention is Sedona the avatar, but in some cases they may be looking for more than a cheap thrill. They may be looking for a virtual relationship, and in those rare cases, hopefully something that translates into a real life relationship.

If you think I am nuts, ask a friend who

is in a virtual relationship or examine your own. Exactly how did it start? The ice had to be broken somehow. That I'm sure a hot looking avatar probably helps. While we see the avatar and that spawns the initial interest, what many of us are looking for in a virtual relationship is a real life lover. Maybe not physically, not initially, but in soul, spirit and mind what holds our attractions for each other in Second Life is not a hot avatar. In the end, the real interest of a relationship lies in the puppeteer pulling those strings. In many ways love in Second Life, in the long run, is very similar to love in real life. While the eye candy is nice initially, it's really the person inside that we all fall in love with.

So if my assumption is right, love in a relationship in Second Life is really the same in many ways as love in a relationship in real life, and if so, why do many Second Life relationships fail so quickly? Well probably because in real life they do too, and most likely for the same reasons. People can fall out of love as quickly as they fall in love. Is there any difference in how we love each other in Second Life and in real life? Ignoring the obvious physical differences in how we love each other virtually (and I really hope that virtual reality solves that problem before I get too old to not care any longer), how we fall in love and feel for each other can feel the same for some people, but not

for all. One of the realities I learned early in my second life is that there are two extremes when it comes to how people interact with each other here. Like everything else in the world, I've given them labels. They are the "Realist" and the "Role Player".

Now understand I feel these are the two extremes with most of us falling somewhere in the middle of the scale.



The Realist brings their real life with them into Second Life. They feel their avatar is an extension of their real selves. Many times you hear them say "Avatars have real feelings too". This is the mark of a true realist. The Role Player on the other hand thinks of Second Life not so much a simulation of real life social interactions, but more of a game. A place where they can be someone they would not most likely be

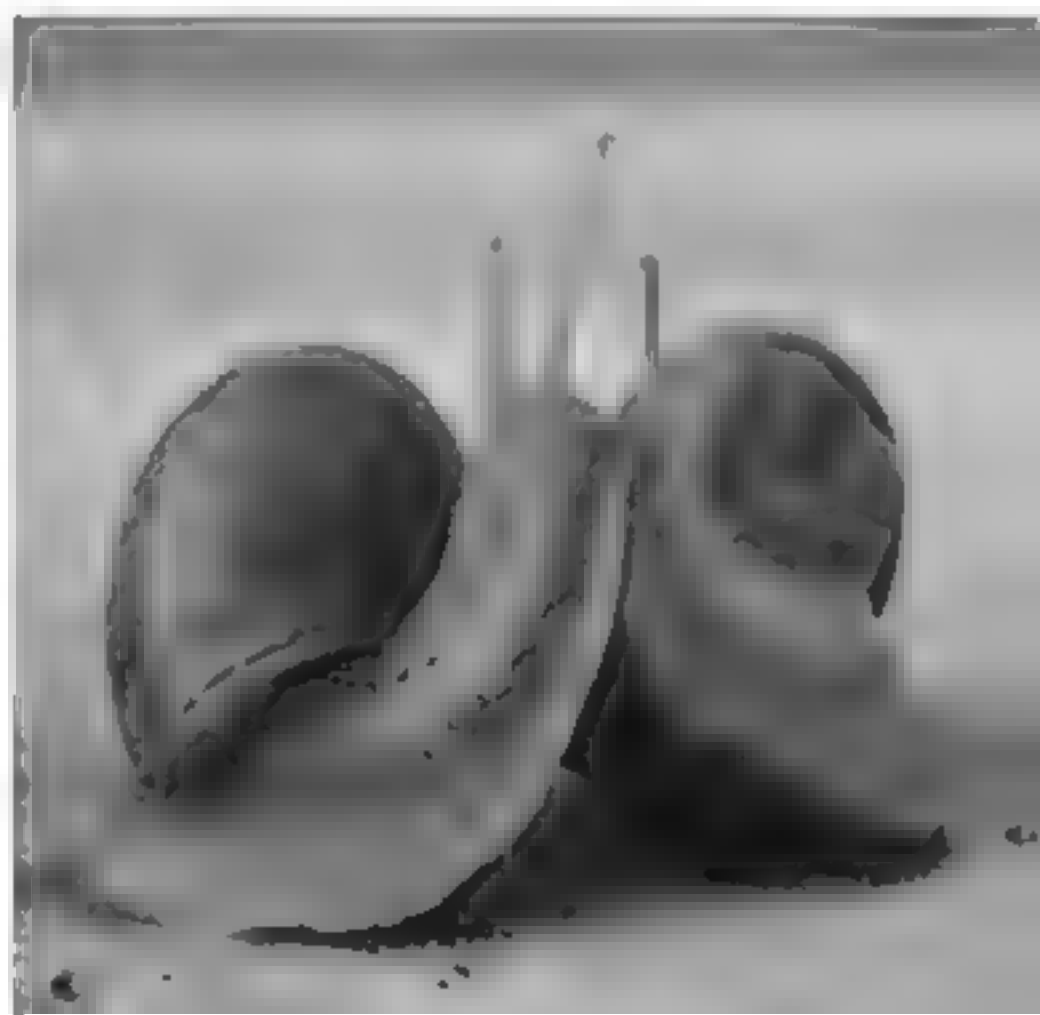
in real life. They look for the fantasy element in Second Life and don't take their virtual lives too seriously.

We all have a bit of both in each and every one of us. For me, I feel I'm about half way leaning on the realist side. I bring my real life into conversations. I take my relationship with my partner, Sky, seriously and think about her every day in my real life. I discuss my real life family with my close friends and as you can tell from my writings, I interchange my use of Sedona and myself in conversation. However, I also love the fantasy elements of Second Life. It's not so much that I don't have to worry about periods or cellulite but that I can express myself in any fashion that I wish, or try just about any fantasy that would like to explore. And for those that know me, they know that I have.

Everybody falls somewhere on this scale, and where, exactly, can have some serious implications about how you feel about virtual relationships. What is even more interesting is when the role player begins a relationship with a realist. This usually ends up in disaster. Many times Sed's shoulder has had tears applied to it from that realist who realized that their role-playing partner really didn't feel the same way they did about the relationship. While this can also happen in our real lives (we even call those types "players"), it

can usually be detected by most of us early in the dating period. But here in the virtual world that successful player detection can be significantly more difficult. This is where I feel love in Second Life can be dangerous for those who don't realize some think "it's just a game."

Where this becomes even more tenuous is when people in the virtual world take on completely different identities in the form of alts. This has serious ramifications, as now your partner can cheat on you and there is for the most part no way you can know or find out. For the role player this really isn't an issue. The pure role player again doesn't believe the social interactions they have tie to their own reality. Any feelings they would portray would all be a part of the role. However, the realist allows their feelings for their partner to migrate into their real life. That partner-



ship has true meaning in their real life and carries with it the emotional baggage similar to a true real life relationship. In most cases the relationship is not as strong as a real life one but in some, it can be. In these instances, the potential exists to allow the virtual relationship to move into the real world.

So to finish off my babbling about love, let's bring home the bacon and talk

Another common theme I see in the virtual world, but not in the real world as much, is the three-way love affair or a slant on that theme: open relationships. Oh sure, three-ways exist in the real world. But in truth, the percentage of real three way relationships is quite small, while in Second Life it's very common when looking at it per capita. Ask around, you'll find that open partnerships are extremely common in our

...love in Second Life can be dangerous for those who don't realize that some think "it's just a game"

about the variations from these extremes. One thing I see among friends and perving profiles is that many people have relationships that are more like a "friends with benefits" aspect. This aligns very well to the same real world instance of the same name. In this case there is probably some realist aspect to the relationship in that there is a mutual trust between the two sex partners. Is love really involved? Possibly yes. In both the virtual world and the real world, many times when two people take on this type of courtship, one of them that is actually in love, with the other wanting to keep the relationship platonic. Most of us know how these turn out.

virtual world. In both cases here, I believe this phenomenon is due to a mix of the realist and the role player coming together. Feelings are shared between the two partners but hey, it's not like its actually real, right? "It's all for fun" is usually the answer you get back if you press why the relationship the two have is not monogamous.

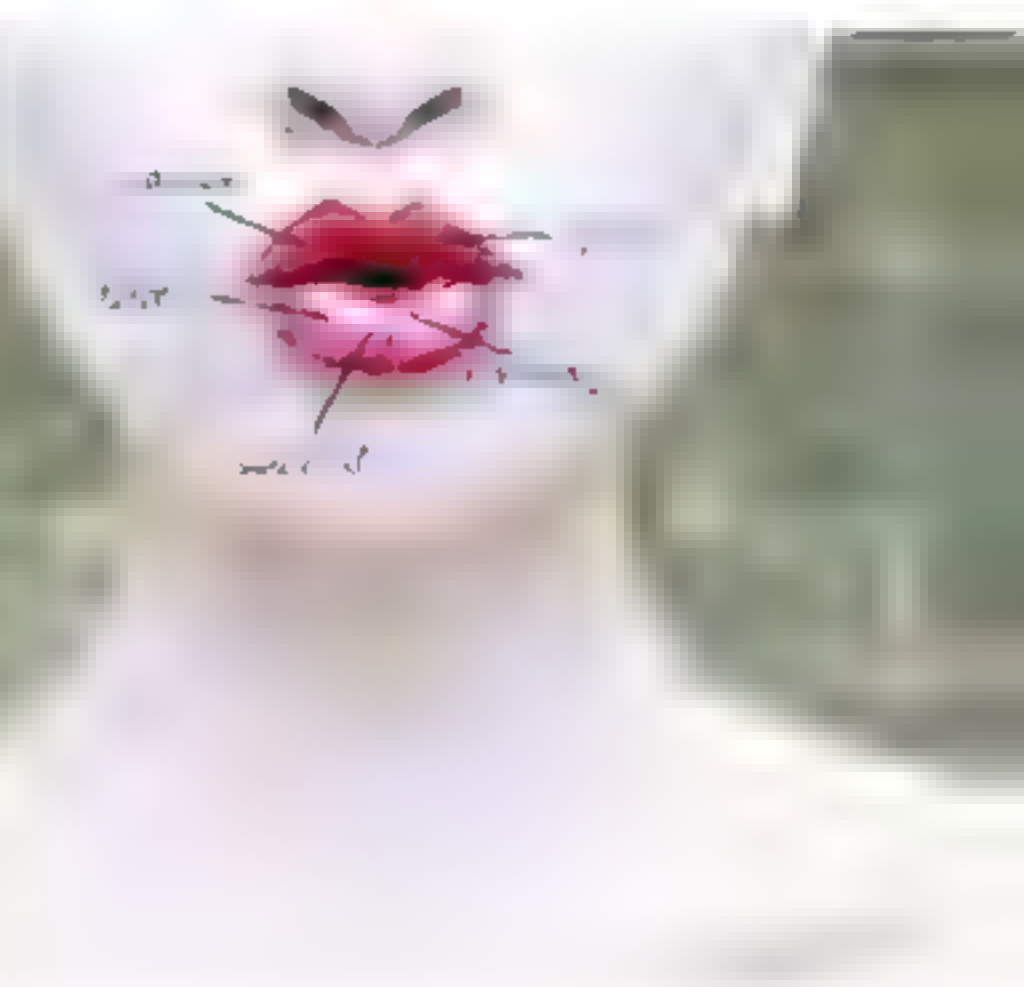
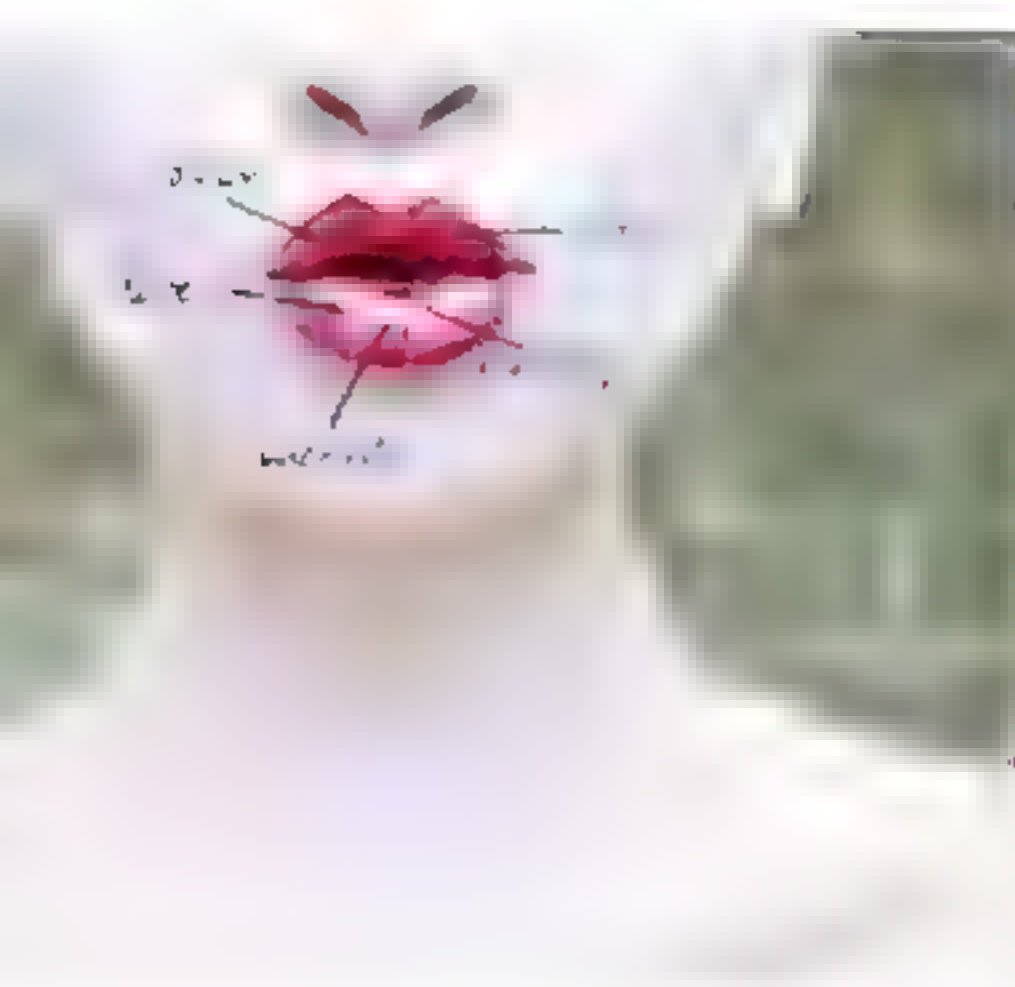
Here love can be an interesting part of the equation. In many cases, both partners do show affection for each other; however, one or both have moved more to the role player side of the scale and wish to keep the partnership open. Again, this can have ramifications if one of the partners goes along with the deal so that they can have the relation-

ship and really bend to the realist side. Eventually, feelings can go sour as the realist leaning partner has to deal with jealousy issues and fear of being left alone or separated from their lover altogether.


Love in Second Life is in many ways more complex than love in our real lives. Given that real life love is bat-shit crazy, think of all of the songs, movies, books, poems, news, scandals, and just general drama related to real life love, and it's no wonder virtual love often falls to the same depths of drama too. With all of the added ways people feel not only about love in general but in how they present it in Second Life, it's a wonder any of us can keep a relation-

ship for months or even years.

I can say I am proud I am one of those people that have been in a long-term virtual relationship with my partner Skiler for years now. Ours is a monogamous relationship and our rules are simple and have helped us to keep our trust and love for each other on track. But what really has helped us is that that our boundaries are clear and we both accept them. If either one of us feels we've crossed over our mutual scope of love, we are sure to let the other know. So after all of my ranting here, I can say from experience that real life love and virtual love do have one thing in common for both to flourish in the long term. Communication!



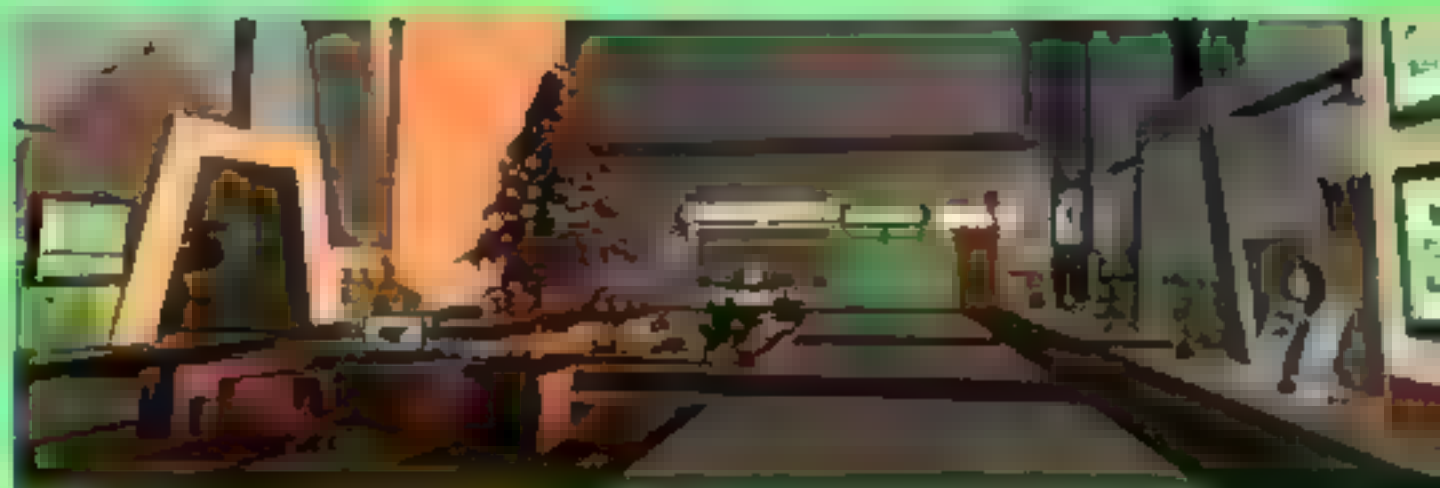
Digital Financial

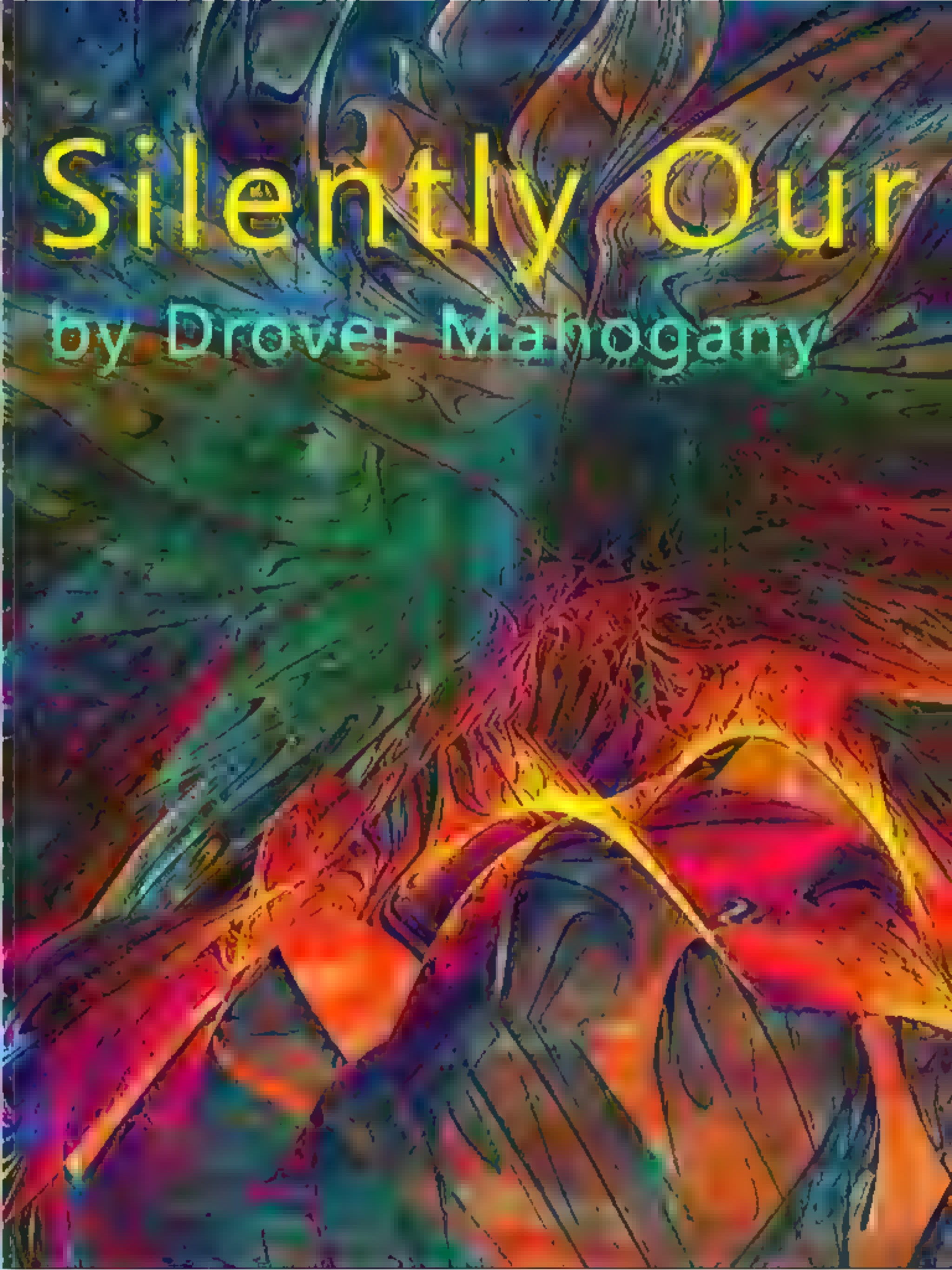


Digital Financial (DFN) is a Second Life-based full-service brokerage house and services company. For educating Second Life on virtual businesses with the wisdom of combined experience, DFN will also have onsite modern and professional offices and stores for real life. DFN has recruited the best talent Second Life has to offer to create a new breed of simulation exchange. Digital Financial Exchange will offer a before seen level of transparency and education for investors and business managers. DFN will bring together the professional businesses raising capital for growth and expansion, potential investors that are interested and want to participate in growth.

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Silently Our

by Drover Mahogany

Souls Speak

I

some pictures demand a thousand words
no ifs or buts though many whys
what alchemy viewer to subject bind
that attraction burgeon unbidden
fascination, delight, wonder ineffable combine?
deeper still this mystery tantalizes
when image made with virtual lens
of avatar rendered from its subject's mind
interposes between one mind and another
both imagined avatar and its image virtual
thus does mystery in outline resolve:
mind, body, soul onto virtual world project
as avatar imagined and realized,
such artifact of fraught creation
virtual image self-interestedly frame

artwork by Milly Sharple

II

so may it seem ... but little appeals:
a compelling integrity instead uncertainty defeats
mind, body, soul, this trio mine, unwitting deciphers
signals, messages -- overt and tacit - replete
this secret intelligence deftly fabricating certainty
for here on second life code breakers are we
though we know or heed it not
as everywhere, logic and feeling, thought and emotion
pose challenges unknowable, imponderable:
through interstices of logic invoked, soul to soul silently speak
no barriers may consciously prevent
secret transmissions between our souls
if limitations, differences, incongruities
their hidden resonances impede
yet does this telepathy proceed

III

she gave me this image specific
its choice and her giving each speak to me
beyond action and image her avatar also communes
silent interactions continuing, gaze by gaze sustained:
how read odds of real translated to virtual, its hidden tells?
slender, straight, tall her image stands
shortish mane tawny silver bears
focused eyes, fringe draped, intelligent gleam
curved lips parting, two white teeth sheen
cheeks, nose freckles sprinkle
body posed to camera side, her neck held proud
face planes and angles, back of neck exposed
shoulders mostly bare, slender arms carried low
dark vest, sidewall gently swelling,
head forthright turned, intently bearing my searching gaze

IV

real creates imagined what content transmits true?
continuum of avatars each creator may shape why this one?
our minds, fast evolving, virtual illusions readily accept
how do we warrant these illusions truth do offer?
formulate all such questions yet compelling answers lack
in my being some mechanism conjures its own truth
vibrations of probability coalesce, contingency tending to certainty:
parenting this creation neither wish nor desire alone
but the hidden inner truth of her making now made express
a metaphor virtually realized of the factually real perceived
decipher the creator's statement of intent
whether allure of ideal shape, intelligence manifest,
form reminiscent of real or fantasy realized:
weigh its truth revealed
against the spectrum of experienced virtual truth

V

in the end, and to the very end,
the worlds my senses create contingent must be
information imperfect, sensory filters, processor limitations
store of wisdom sometimes unreliably learned,
capacity for risk-taking by experience diminished
do not look for certainty – a chimera distracting
do not hope for the fruits of gravity – only effort yields reward
do not fairy tales expect – neither real nor surreal are simply so
learn instead the secret language of the soul – hers and yours
let integrity speak to integrity, authentic to authentic
demeanor, gaze, form– pride in self and accomplishment
intelligent, independent, strong willed, skilled
committed to her uniqueness, to her own vision hews
tensile strength nervous energy applies, her deeper self, reserved, hides:
perceptions subtly interrogated, the conjurer's flourish completed

s p h i n x

by Flor Nachtigal

Ask

Ask at your own risk

Ask if you dare

Or ask nicely

Ask as if you care

And I may have to kill you

Or

Maybe I will answer?



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